



Tina Lentz
Director

In President Obama's inaugural address, he spoke of the actions that we can take to control the fate of our community - kindness, selflessness, willingness and courage - words meant to inspire us to do whatever we can to make our community better.

In our last issue, I challenged you to take a stand and join the movement to end domestic violence. In this issue we are providing information we hope will continue that movement. We do this because last year Louisville's domestic-related slayings totaled 21 and included the deaths of eight children.

We are asking you once again to speak out loud about this topic - to your friends, family and co-workers - and help raise the awareness needed for people to become involved, and we will continue to do this until there is no longer a reason.

If you have already stepped up to that

challenge, I encourage you to share how so that you can inspire others to do the same. If there is something in particular you want to know or someone you want to know more about, share that with us as well. Together, we can make a difference. ofw@louisvilleky.gov

**"We can't allow any idle hands," President Obama said.
"Everybody's got to be involved."**

Continuing the Movement: Looking at Domestic Violence from Another Perspective

Eliminating violence against women is...men's work

Men's violence against women is a huge problem that seems to have no end. We all know the statistics: 1 - 4 women sexually assaulted by men while in college, 1 in 5 girls are physically or sexually abused by their boyfriends while in High School, 1 in 3 women are victims of domestic violence by their husbands or boyfriends in their lifetimes, 7 out of 10 women are sexually harassed by men in the classroom or workplace, etc. Generally, when these statistics and the stories these statistics represent are told, they are told in a way that focuses on women - what women need to do to protect themselves, what women need to know in order to make themselves safer, etc.

At MensWork, eliminating violence against women, inc., we believe that it is men's response-ability to work to end domestic and sexual violence. After all, the vast majority of perpetrators of both are men (by most estimates, 90 - 95% of sexual assault are perpetrated by men and 85-90% of domestic violence is perpetrated by men). Although it is true that most domestic and sexual violence is perpetrated by men, most men are not violent towards women. One of our goals, for example, is to engage 85 - 90% of the men in the Metro Louisville community in active efforts to combat and prevent sexual and domestic violence. We do this by focusing on the majority of men who do not perpetrate violence and who, in fact, believe domestic and sexual violence to be abhorrent, inexcusable, and just plain wrong!

We do this through education, engagement efforts, community organizing and leadership development. We educate men and boys about the forms of domestic and sexual violence, the impacts that being victimized has on women and men who are victimized, and how to ensure that they are engaging in healthy relationships and gender respect. We create ways for men to organize events to combat sexual and domestic violence. We organize communities to become more

aware of the issues and take steps community-wide to end sexual and domestic violence. And we help develop men as leaders (currently, these efforts focus on male youth) to promote gender respect and healthy relationships.

Although only 2 years old, and still an all volunteer organization, MensWork is making strong strides in our community to engage men and prevent men's violence. Some of our efforts, in fact, have resulted in us being invited to speak at the Global Symposium on Engaging Men in Gender Equality - a ground-breaking event being held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil March 30 - April 4, 2009.

When men become as active as women always have been in working to prevent sexual and domestic violence, we'll see a dramatic drop in the incidence of all forms of men's violence against women and others. We invite you to join us. You can contact MensWork at info@mensworkinc.com, or at (502)494-9044. You can also check out our website at www.mensworkinc.com.



Rus Ervin Funk, MSW, is the co-founder and Executive Director of MensWork. He has been involved in organizing men to stop sexual and domestic violence for over 20 years. He is the current president of the Board of the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and his latest book is *Reaching Men: Strategies for Preventing Sexist Attitudes, Behaviors and Violence* (Jist Publications, 2006)



Project Homeless Connect

On October 22, 2008, the Office for Women participated in the Project Homeless Connect Event organized by the Veterans Administration, Metro Housing and the Coalition for the Homeless. These agencies provided an opportunity for the homeless to receive needed food, clothing, medical care, social and psychological counseling. OFW participated in this event to make connections with homeless women in our community and to better understand the barriers they face. Interviews were conducted with 34 women.

Next year, we plan to be there again to talk with the women who participate about their education levels, employment status, hopes for themselves and their children. In addition, we will be visiting homeless shelters that provide services for women throughout the year – learning more about the programs and services they offer. Improving our understanding will help us to be better advocates as we work to improve the status of all women in our community.

A snapshot of what we learned is offered below. To see the report in its entirety, use this link: <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/OFW/Reports.htm>

Our thanks to the U of L Sociology Student Association for collecting gloves as a community project. The gloves were distributed to women and their children during Project Homeless Connect.

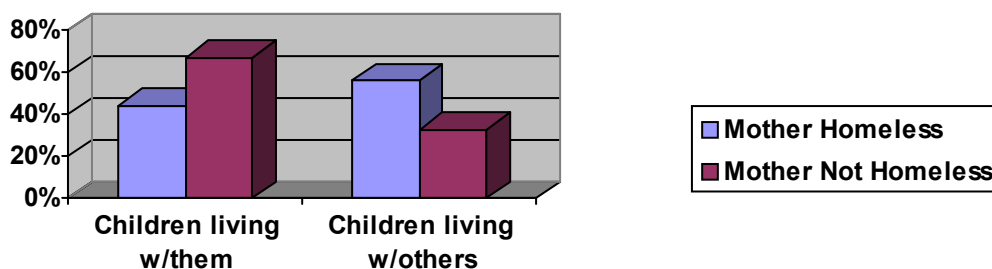
The Association's glove drive was so successful that OFW was able to also provide gloves to Family Scholar House, the Center For Women & Families, and the Salvation Army's Transitional Housing Program.

Fast Facts About Women & Homelessness in our community:

- Families comprise About 25% of the homeless.
- 20% of those in emergency shelters are female.
- 50% of those in transitional housing are females.

For more information on homelessness in Louisville, visit the Coalition for the Homeless online: <http://www.louhomeless.org/>

Percentage of Mothers with Children Under 18 by Homeless Status



Research shows that a significant percentage of homeless families experience temporary or permanent separation of a child. OFW's interviews indicated that the children of most homeless mothers (56%) were not living with the mother.

Additional Information about Mothers and their Children:

- 75% of the homeless women had children under 18
- The average number of children per mother was 2.9
- 21% indicated that their children were grown and staying elsewhere
- 56% of homeless mothers were separated from their children

More data:

When asked "What do you think was the main reason you became homeless?" half of the women interviewed provided multiple reasons for their situation. The top four reasons listed for their cause of homelessness were: 44% substance abuse, 35% lost home/evicted, 29% lost job/income, and 24% domestic violence.

A Conversation Café: Domestic Violence Interactive Workshop

Our vision of building an interconnected community of champions to improve the status of women, while making Louisville the ideal hometown and a safe and healthy place for all to live and grow ***depends on you***. It is your voice that lets us know what women in our community are needing and thinking. It is **women supporting women** in our community that allows us to do many of the things we do.

During 2009, Office For Women will offer many opportunities for you to join us in fulfilling that vision.

We will continue offering our **Conversation Café** series of *Women and Health* and *Women and Entrepreneurship*. In addition, we will be adding *Women and Leadership*. All of which will provide a venue of networking, learning and sharing.

We will continue to operate as an information portal via our website - providing direct access to services and support to women who own their

On December 2 the Office for Women hosted the 3rd Conversation Café in our "Women and Health" series at the Douglas Community Center. Forty-two people participated in the interactive workshop "In Her Shoes" based on true stories and real life experiences of women with abusive partners provided through the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Each participant read a scenario and then was guided to different stations (shelter, medical, police, clergy, housing, court, etc.) based upon choices that they made. The hour-long interactive piece was followed by a panel discussion whose members included Gabriela Alcalde (Kentucky Health Justice Network), the Honorable Jacquelyn P. Eckert (Jefferson District Court), Rus Funk (MensWork) and Denise Vazquez Troutman (Center for Women and Families).



Responding to a request for feedback related to the workshop, participants shared the following:

"It was enlightening to be put in the shoes of someone else's troubles and follow out their journey to deal with them. Some of their decisions wouldn't have been mine but it made for an increased understanding of others

difficulty in making those decisions."

"I thought that it realistically portrayed the plight of the domestic violence victim, and brought to light the fact that some choices that should help the victim only serve to worsen the problem."

"The aspect that was most "new" to me was the cultural change that needs to take place, the way boys are raised to men, how men need to hold each other accountable."

"Please present this information as frequently and to as large an audience as possible!"



The Office for Women plans to offer this workshop again in 2009. If you are interested in learning more about domestic violence from this perspective watch for the announcement in future OFW publications or on our website.



own businesses; on how you can support non-profit agencies that provide needed services to women and girls; and helping you find the women's club or organization that matches your desires to get involved. All we ask for in return is your feedback, participation and support.

Upcoming Mayor's Community Conversations



**All Community
Conversations begin at
6:30pm on the 3rd Monday
of the Month**

Be sure to look for OFW at
Community Conversations.

- Jan 26** Westport Middle
8100 Westport Rd
- Feb 16** Moore High
6415 Outer Loop
- Mar 16** Iroquois High
4615 Taylor Blvd
- Apr 20** Stuart Middle
4601 Valley Station
- May 18** Newburg Middle
4901 Exeter Ave
- Jun 15** Ramsey Middle
6409 Gellhaus Ln
- Jul 20** Carter Elem
3600 Bohne Ave
- Aug 17** Fairdale High
1001 Fairdale Rd
- Sep 21** Atherton High
3000 Dundee Rd
- Oct 19** Southern High
8620 Preston Hwy
- Nov 16** Central High
1130 W Chestnut
- Dec** No MCC



WHERE YOU WILL FIND THE OFFICE FOR WOMEN



February - April 2009 - The first *just for women*: LMPD/OFW Women Citizen's Police Academy. Thirty-five women will engage in a series of 12 free workshops sure to raise awareness regarding police-related services. Be sure to watch for updates and the announcement of the 2010 class!



February 26, 2009 - Center for Women and Families' 22nd Anniversary Celebration of Service and Survival. Click here to learn more:
<http://www.thecenteronline.org/celebration.php>



May 11-15, 2009 - Celebrating Women's Health Week. Kick-off is May 11 at 810 Barret. The Norton Cancer Institute Mobile Mammography Unit will be there as well as many other community partners. In addition, every day that week the mobile unit will be at a different women's organization. Look for the details on our website and in the next issue of "The Scoop".

<http://louisvilleky.gov/OFW>

OBSERVANCES

Click on the links provided to learn more.....

January

Stalking Awareness Month - <http://www.stalkingawarenessmonth.org/>

February

Feb 6th - Go Red for Women/National Wear Red Day -
<http://www.goredforwomen.org/>

Black History Month - <http://www.loc.gov/topics/africanamericans/>

March

International Women's Day - <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/about.asp>

Women's History Month - <http://www.loc.gov/topics/womenshistory/>

April

Sexual Assault Awareness Month - <http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/>

April 28th - Equal Pay Day - <http://www.pay-equity.org/day.html>

May

May 10-16th - Women's Health Week - <http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/>

About OFW

The Office for Women (OFW) vision is to create an interconnected community of champions working to improve the status of all women by bringing individual community members and organizations together to enhance collaboration, communication and coordination. Our focus is advocacy and public policy in the areas of Women's Health and Safety; Economic Well-being and Empowerment; and Investing in Girls and Young Women.